

THE RELEVANCE OF ASTROLOGY

- Gushtasp B. Forbes

[The relevance of Astrology' is one of the chapters from the recently published book "A Basic Textbook of Astrology" written by Mr. Gushtasp Forbes, who requires no introduction to the readers of Dini Avaz. Mr Forbes has contributed interesting articles to 'Dini Avaz' readership since last few years - and who is now one of the committee members of 'Dini Avaz'. For our astrological minded and other readers We reproduce the following with the permission of the author - Ed]

ORIGIN & HISTORY:

The origin and history of astrology is rather uncertain, in the sense that its antiquity is not clearly traceable. Each civilization claims that the origin of astrology was at the time of its zenith. Thus, we have the Egyptians claiming that astrology started during its civilization, while the Chinese make a similar claim. The Babylonians and the Greeks also make the same claims. Further back in time, the Maya and the Inca cultures also bear testimony to the fact that astrology was known and flourished during those days. India also attributes that the origin of this subject was during the Vedic period. It is, however, historically established that the first ever religion was Zoroastrianism, whose Prophet Lord Zoroaster was born about 6000 B.C. i.e. about 8000 years ago. The Saptarshi calculations also support this thesis. Yet, we find that even before the birth of Zoroaster, during the Kyanian Dynasty in Persia, the entry of the sun in Sayana Aries was celebrated as a major festival during the reign of King Jamshed, after whose name, even today the Persians and the Parsees celebrate the Vernal Equinox named after the King, as Jamshedi Naoroz. Thus, the science of Astrology was known even before the birth of Zoroaster. In fact, archaeologists have recently unearthed a bone said to be over 30,000 years old, bearing

marks that appear to refer to the phases of the Moon. It would, therefore, be proper to say that the origins of astrology, probably date back, almost as far as, humankind itself.

However, nature and time takes a toll of all civilisations. Hence, today, perhaps the most ancient recorded text on the subject of astrology appears to be the monumental work of Varahamihira's Brihat Jataka, which is said to be about 2,000 years old. Later on, Parasara, Gargacharya, Bhattotapala were also the doyens of the subject. Amongst the more recent authoritative texts is Tetrabiblos, written in the second century A.D. by Alexandrine Claudius Ptolemy. His catalogs and atlases of the stars and planets were unmatched for accuracy until the 17th century. Subsequently, with the growth of Christianity, astrology gradually fell into disrepute. In the East, however, astrological writings and techniques continued to flourish and were passed on to the Arabs. The Arabs pursued the study of Astrology, side by side with Astronomy. The scholars such as Abu Massar and Al Biruni, were truly great astrologers, having studied the subject with the help of their Persian masters. In fact, the Tajiks were also well adept in the subject and it is from the Yavanas, that the entire Branch of Varshaphala has been included in Indian texts by translations of Acharya Nilkantha and Samar Simhadi. It was through the Latin translations of the Arabic astrological texts, that the 12th century European scholars "rediscovered" astrology and by the 16th century, astrology was again fully revived and became an acknowledged part of the cultural outlook of all men of learning. It was during this era that great astrologers such as Johannes Kepler and Dr. John Dee flourished. During the late 19th century, astrology received a considerable boost from the occult revival launched by Madame H.P. Blavatsky and her Theosophical Society. Some of the modern day

astrologers of repute are Alan Leo, Evangeline Adams, Elsbeth Ebertin, Sepharial, Raphael, Prof. E.H. Bailey and our own Dr. B.V. Raman.

BASIS AND RELEVANCE OF ASTROLOGY:

Time and again, the doubting Thomases and the so called rationalists have cast aspersions on the validity of astrology. A simpler and straightforward poser they put is, "how can planets, which are so far away from us, have any effect on the life on Earth"? For a searching mind in pursuit of Truth, this is a good enough question. But for those who attack the subject, not having an open and unbiased mind, it is merely a time pass with the intent to denigrate the subject, without even having studied it, in the first place. The above question can be effectively explained now, scientifically, for those who always want and insist on "Scientific Proofs". So here we go.

In March 1951, John H. Nelson, an American electronic and radio engineer, published an article in the RCA Review, a technical journal published by the Radio Corporation of America, which was sensational, in the sense that it shattered the orthodox views about humans and the universe. His findings appeared to confirm the basic belief of Astrology, that the planets can and do influence our lives. His research proved that the apparent difficulty or ease of short-wave radio communication, was due to the varying positions of the Earth's planetary neighbours. Nelson checked records of radio disturbances dating back to the 1920s. He found that magnetic storms - the cause of radio disturbances - occur when two or more planets, viewed from the Earth, are either very close together, or at right angles to one another, or 180 degrees apart. The position of the planets did appear to influence radio reception, and in a way that came as no surprise to the astrologers. We know these relationships as aspects between the planets and are known to us since ancient times. The conjunction when the planets are very close together on the same side of the Sun, is considered neutral. When the planets are in square, at right angles to one

another, it is seen as disharmonious and even evil. The same applies when the planets are in opposition i.e. 180 degrees apart on opposite sides of the Sun.

Nelson's research also "discovered" that magnetic disturbances were notably absent and that the short-wave reception was, therefore, good when two or more planets were 60 degrees or 120 degrees apart. These are precisely the aspects that astrology regards as harmonious, easy and good. Further, Nelson also found that aspects of 135 degrees and 150 degrees also affected radio reception. These aspects are also considered negative in astrology.

The proof of the pudding, they say is in the eating. Nelson tried to project his findings to the future planetary positions and obtained an 80% accuracy. Later by refining his methods to include details of all the planets, he increased his success rate to a dizzy 93%. Nelson, thus provided the first piece of scientific evidence to show that life on Earth could be influenced by the planets.

The Late Dr. Rudolf Tomaschek, an academic physicist and Chairman of the world Geophysical Council, made a statistical analysis of 134 large earthquakes. He found that the planetary positions in relationship to the place and time of these earthquakes were highly significant. The "earthquake aspects" almost always included one or more of the planets - Jupiter, Hershel and Neptune. The stronger the earthquake, the more likely these planets were involved, often in the traditionally sinister square or opposition aspects.

On the other hand, a Soviet physician, Dr. A.K. Podshibyakin, discovered a remarkable and unique connection between physical events on the Sun and the incidence of road accidents in the (then) Soviet Union. His findings, published in 1967 showed that the day after a solar flare - a magnetic storm on the surface of the sun - there was a marked increase in road accidents, often four times a daily average. His findings

were even accepted by researchers in West Germany. He informed that the Solar flares produce a tremendous amount of ultra-violet radiation, which causes changes in the Earth's atmosphere, which in turn affects the human body, slowing it down.

One of the most successful economic forecasts of the 19th century, was made not by an economist, but by an astronomer, Sir William Herschel (1738 - 1822). In a paper read before the Royal Society of London on April 16, 1801, he called attention to an apparent relationship between sunspot activity and the price of wheat. From deep studies of six periods between 1650 and 1800, he concluded that in periods with little or no sunspots, wheat was scarce and hence prices were high. Conversely, in periods of abundant sunspots, crops were abundant and prices low.

The next major exponent of the Sunspot Theory was the noted English economist, William Stanley Jevons (1835 - 82), who read a paper "The Solar Period and the Price of Corn" before the Bristol Meeting of the British Association in 1875. He stated: "It has lately been proved, beyond all reasonable doubt, that there is a periodic variation in the Sun's condition, which also marked the occurrences of magnetic storms, cyclones and other meteorological disturbances. Thus rainfall and other atmospheric phenomena are more or less influenced by the same changes in Sun's condition. Now, if weather depends in any degree upon the solar period, it follows that the harvest and the price of grain will depend more or less upon the solar period and will go through periodic fluctuations in periods of time, equal to those of the sunspots".

Subsequently, the Garcia - Mata - Shaffner studies of 1934 confirmed the earlier Herschel - Jevons efforts to correlate business and sunspot cycles in terms of an 11 year periodicity as also the 3.5 year periodicity.

Besides having an effect on business activity, the sunspot cycle also has a marked influence on the rate of heart attacks on human

beings. The medical fraternity, has of late acknowledged this correlation too. It is now a known and accepted fact by modern science, that a number of spots appear upon the sun, when Jupiter is in perihelion and disappear when Jupiter is in aphelion. They tend to affect the nervous system, make men irritable, quarrelsome and violent. These spots disturb the gases of our atmosphere and tend to epidemics, tornadoes, cyclones, cloudbursts and atmospheric disturbances.

Let us proceed to see some more "proofs" of the relevance of astrology.

Dr. Frank A Brown, a scientist and Professor of Biology at Northwestern University conducted research for several years into what he called "Biological Clocks" - the natural rhythms shown by all life on Earth. Over a 10 year period, Brown and his team conducted experiments on a variety of phenomena. What emerged was astonishing. All these experiments followed rhythmical cycles which were triggered by Cosmic influences, notably those connected with the Sun and the Moon.

Thus, rats living under controlled conditions in darkened cages, were found to be twice as active when the Moon was above the horizon as when it was below it. They seemed to sense instinctively when the Moon was up and responded to it, though they had no way of seeing it.

Equally surprising was the behaviour of oysters. When they are in their natural habitat, oysters open and close their shells according to the rhythm of the tides. At high tide, they open their shells to feed and at low tide they close them as protection against drying out. The tides are of course, produced by the gravitational pull of the Moon and the Sun. It was merely assumed that the movement of the tides alone caused the opening and closing of the oyster's shells. No one had ever been bold enough to suggest that oysters were responding directly to the Moon and Sun. But Brown discovered that apparently, the oysters were doing just that.

Dr. Brown had removed some oysters from their natural habitat of the Atlantic seaboard and placed them in darkened containers, so that sunlight or moonlight could not reach them and took them to a laboratory in Evanston, Illinois, a thousand miles off the sea. Within a fortnight, the oysters had lost the pattern of opening and closing that they had displayed in their old home in the Atlantic and were following the rhythm of what the tides would have been in Evanston, had that town been on the sea. In other words, the oysters proved that they were not directly influenced by the tides, but by some other signals related to the Moon and the Sun.

The same indeed is the case with humans. Just as three - fourths of the Earth is made of water, similarly approximately three-fourths of the human body is made of liquids. The combined gravitational pull of the Sun and Moon exert enough influence on the liquids within the body. Thus, the menses amongst women take place as a result of their effect, alongwith that of Mars. In fact, the first menses in a female child normally takes place, when the Moon at birth by progression, comes to a point exactly 180 degrees away, i.e. in opposition to the natal Moon. The menopause also occurs when the Moon completes 1.75 rotation from its natal place, by progression. This usually occurs between the age of 42 and 48, give or take 2 years either way, depending upon the daily motion of the Moon at Birth.

Further, by now, it has been scientifically established that there is a direct link between the behaviour of human beings and the Moon. The result of a study made by an American Scientist, Dr. Leonard Ravitz of Duke University and published in 1960, confirms the age old belief that there is a nexus between the Moon and madness. Over a fairly long period of time, Dr. Ravitz plotted the variations in the small electric charges that are continually given off by the human body. He worked on two groups, one the mentally ill and another consisting of healthy people. He found that the body's electrical potential underwent regular changes

in all the people tested and that these changes coincided with the phases of the Moon. The most marked changes occurred when the Moon was full. He was, therefore, able to predict emotional changes in his mental patients and to confirm that the full Moon does tend to provoke crises in people whose mental balance is already disturbed.

The relevance of astrology is perhaps, never much pronounced than in the field of pre-natal epoch. Professor E.H. Bailey's monumental works are legendary in this field. The date of a persons birth depends of course on the time of conception (Aadhana Kundali) and this in turn, depends on the time of ovulation - the release of an egg from the ovary. Psychiatrist Eugen Jonas of Czechoslovakia has "discovered" a clear connection between the time of ovulation and the Moon. His studies show that a woman tends to ovulate during the particular phase of the Moon that prevailed when she was born. Jonas has even used his findings to provide women in Eastern Europe with a new and entirely natural method of contraception. His charts, drawn up to show the days on which a woman can conceive, have proved 98% effective - as efficient as the contraceptive pill, minus of course the side effects. Perhaps, in a later study, we shall discuss this question of pre-natal epoch in greater detail.

There is certainly evidence of a connection between bleeding in general and the transit of the Moon (including its phases). This, of course is known to astrologers since the times of Ptolemy and even before. The simple rule in surgery is that Moon should not be transiting the sign ruling the part of the body to be operated upon, on the day of surgery. This is because the flow of blood is high in that part of the body represented by the sign it signifies, when Moon passes through that sign. This complicates the post surgery process and the healing process itself. Dr. Edson Andrews found that unusual bleeding crises occurred between Moon's first and third quarters.

Perhaps, the most outstanding and outspoken support of Astrology has come from the late Carl G. Jung, whom many consider to have been the greatest psychologist of the 20th century. He believed so profoundly in Astrology that in later life, he insisted on having the horoscope for each of his patients. In fact, the traditional view has been that a physician, doctor or surgeon is rather incomplete without the knowledge of Astrology to support his medical studies. In fact Jung claimed that Astrology would eventually, have to be recognised as a Science.

In reality, Astrology in fact is considered as the science of all sciences. If there is anything that exceeds Astrology, it is Numerology, which I consider as the Mother of all Sciences. Nay; in fact, the very genesis of Galaxies, Zodiacs, Universe and our world can be traced and understood and appreciated only with the deep and esoteric meaning of numbers. This is an extremely complicated subject and unless one has a highly intuitive and receptive

mind and of course a highly evolved Guru to lead him through the large maze of profound truths and intangible concepts, one cannot even hope to get anywhere near it at all.

These are, therefore, only a fraction of the "discoveries", scientists have made, concerning the influence of cosmic events on life on Earth. Many other experiments also lead us to the inevitable conclusion that the Sun, Moon and planets do exert a profound effect on us and our environment and that the basic belief of the astrologers far from being in anyway unscientific is actually based on Universal Truths, that have consistently stood the test of time.

The skeptics and the rationalist may continue to doubt the subject, but there is no turning away from the fact that Astrology is a Science Indeed and the relevance of Astrology is as valid today than it ever was in the past and be assured of the fact that its relevance will continue in future too.

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